

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 05053 050706Z

12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 SAM-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /132 W

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R 050551Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3802

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 5053

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AS

SUBJECT: REACTION TO AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION
OF SOVIET CONTROL OF BALTIC STATES

REF: CANBERRA 4993

1. NEWS OF AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF SOVIET CONTROL OF
BALTIC STATES (REFTEL) LEAKED OUT OVER WEEKEND, PROMPTING
NUMBER OF UNFAVORABLE REACTIONS WITHIN AUSTRALIA.

2. DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TELLS US THAT AUSTRALIAN
AMBASSADOR TO SOVIET UNION, SIR JAMES PLIMSOLL, IN FACT
VISITED ESTHONIA JULY 27-28 AND WHILE THERE GAVE INTER-
VIEW TO TASS OR IZVESTIA CORRESPONDENT, IN COURSE OF
WHICH CHANGE IN AUSTRALIAN POLICY WAS BROUGHT OUT. NEWS
WAS CARRIED OVER SOVIET RADIO DURING PAST WEEKEND, AND
REUTERS DISPATCH FROM MOSCOW AUG 4 TRIGGERED SERIES OF
INQUIRIES TO DFA, WHICH CONFIRMED THAT POLICY CHANGE HAD
OCCURRED.

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PAGE 02 CANBER 05053 050706Z

3. DFA DID NOT RPT NOT MAKE FORMAL PRESS RELEASE.

HOWEVER, DFA SPOKESMAN ORALLY TERMED CHANGE ACCEPTANCE OF REALITY OF 30 YEARS' STANDING. IN CONVERSATION WITH CANBERRA TIMES HE SAID, "ALTHOUGH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT OPPOSES THE WAY IN WHICH THE INCORPORATION (OF THE BALTIC STATES) WAS MADE IN 1940, IT ACCEPTS THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION."

4. REACTION FROM AUSTRALIA'S BALTIC COMMUNITY HAS BEEN PREDICTABLY NEGATIVE. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUSTRALIAN LITHUANIAN COMMUNITY, MR. A. NEVERAUSKAS, COMMENTED, "WE HAVE A LETTER FROM MR. WHITLAM ASSURING US THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT FORMALLY RECOGNIZE THE INCORPORATION OF OUR COUNTRIES INTO THE USSR, BUT NOW HE ACTS DIFFERENTLY. THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN DURING THE ELECTIONS AND IT GOT A LOT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ALP. WE HAVE BEEN BETRAYED." OTHER BALTIC LEADERS COMMENTED IN A SIMILAR VEIN.

5. OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN SENT TELEGRAM TO PRIME MINISTER AUGUST 4, SAYING OF THE POLICY CHANGE, "IT IS A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC PATTERN WHICH HAS EMERGED UNDER THIS GOVERNMENT, WHEREBY ESSENTIAL SECURITY LINKS AND ALLIANCES ARE DIMINISHED IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURES FOR NON-ALIGNMENT WHICH WILL NOT SERVE TO STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY."

6. COMMENT: WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THERE WILL BE EXTENDED REVERBERATIONS FROM THE LABOR GOVERNMENT DECISION. HOWEVER, FROM THE REACTIONS TO DATE FROM THE BALTIC COMMUNITIES, IF THEY DID NOT VOTE LIBERAL ALREADY (SEE PARA 3 OF REFTTEL), THEY PROBABLY WILL IN THE FUTURE.
HARROP

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